



STORY COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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Board of Supervisors Update

As Of Sept 8, 2020

Response:

COVID-19 response operations are on-going. Since the last report, response activities focused on logistical support to K-12 schools, Iowa State University (ISU), and the Test Iowa Clinic. Our office coordinated the use of the Ames Community School District (ACSD) Facilities Management Building as the drop point for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) sent by the Iowa Department of Education (IDoE) and Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Story County schools. ACSD staff helped emergency management separate the delivery into the individual orders for each school district. ISU requested, and was provided use of the emergency management command trailer to provide a climate controlled environment for COVID testing which helped increase their overall testing capacity. Emergency management worked with Mary Greeley Medical Center and Story County Public Health to coordinate state level resource deliveries of initial and sustainment supplies for the Story County Test Iowa Site. All of these actions were coordinated through daily meetings that allow the many different agencies to come together and collaborate on the COVID response.

The Sheriff's Office Dive Team requested deployment of the Command and Control trailer to provide a climate controlled environment for dive operations on July 4th. The trailer was on-site in approximately one hour.

On August 10th, a derecho developed over western Iowa and really started to make its impact felt starting in Boone County, producing the equivalent of an inland hurricane. Within Story County, the issuance of a severe thunderstorm warning with a 70 mph wind tag allowed all dispatch agencies the ability to activate Outdoor Warning Sirens (OWS) per our countywide OWS policy. This was a major factor that helped provide time for residents who were outside to seek shelter prior to the storm hitting. As the storm moved across the county, information coming across the public safety radios indicated the storm was causing serious damage across the entire county. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated utilizing personnel from Story County staff. The priority functions within the EOC were to gain situational awareness on the status of critical infrastructure, facilitate the opening of major transportation routes, and immediate sheltering for those whose homes were uninhabitable. Those functions were primary for the first 24 – 48 hours of the event. The Emergency Management Coordinator requested the issuance of a countywide local disaster declaration from the Vice-Chair of the Emergency Management Commission which was verbally approved on Aug 10th, allowing activation of Iowa Individual Assistance program and access to state resources. Operations then shifted to providing resources to communities to clear debris and allow the re-establishment of community activities. Concurrently, damage assessment was accomplished to help the county qualify for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance, which was approved on Aug 17th. Damage assessment

PREVENTION

PREPAREDNESS

RESPONSE

RECOVERY

MITIGATION

Proudly serving the communities of:

*Ames – Cambridge – Collins – Colo – Gilbert – Huxley – Kelley – McCallsburg – Maxwell- Nevada
Roland – Sheldahl – Slater – Story City – Story County – Zearing*

then shifted to looking at individual residents to gather information to qualify for FEMA Individual Assistance. Each community collected the information and provided it to emergency management who provided it to Iowa Homeland Security. Sufficient residential damages were identified to qualify Story County for FEMA Individual Assistance. Emergency management continues to work with FEMA and other state agencies to provide residents information on programs available to them and to coordinate the establishment of resource centers here in Story County. The response to the derecho demonstrates the tiered structure of emergency management, with local jurisdictions needing to ensure they have the resources and command and control structures to provide immediate response services. Emergency management's role is to facilitate planning, training, and exercises within communities prior to a disaster to help them develop the structures they need to respond. This disaster also highlighted the fact that communities need to have the ability to facilitate the recovery processes after the initial response is over. Each jurisdiction is encourage to capture important lessons identified during the derecho and to start to integrate them into a long-term improvement plan.

Other responses continued throughout this period. Our STAR 1 search and rescue team was asked to activate four times during this period to assist with either K-9 assets or to conduct larger searches.

Emergency management also assisted with the investigation into discoloration of an unnamed creek in Story City.

Planning:

All state requirements for the Comprehensive Operations Planning were completed and submitted for approval. FY 2021 planning will focus on Emergency Support Function (ESF) 4/Firefighting, ESF-9/Search and Rescue, and ESF-13/Public Safety.

Short-term planning for on-going COVID and derecho operations continues. For COVID, the focus is on sustainment of testing, potential child care and nutrition issues should schools shift to online education, and vaccination operations hopefully late November or early December.

Preparedness:

Training

Unfortunately, most training has come to a standstill due to the operations tempo created by the COVID and derecho response. The Coordinator and Deputy will work to achieve training requirements through virtual instruction. If time permits, we are looking to do EOC training later in the year.

Exercises

None

Operations

Emergency management received 15 radios from Story County which have become the 'banked radios'. These radios will remain under Story County ownership and emergency management will be responsible for the operational aspects of the radios such as programming, maintenance, and mobilization of the assets.

No one was willing to accept the required leadership positions for the Coalition for Disaster Recovery (CDR). This led to a unanimous decision to dissolve the coalition and for these responsibility to revert to the Story County Emergency Management Agency. This is a significant loss of disaster response and recovery capabilities here in Story County, but the resources were just not there for the CDR to be self-sustaining.

Emergency management is providing storage space for the Sheriff's Office water recovery boat in the shed rented from Facilities.

Looking Forward

Response/recovery activities will continue long-term for both COVID and the derecho. The workload for COVID will not decrease as we hopefully transition into wide-scale vaccination operations which will extend well into 2021. Derecho activities should reduce within a couple of weeks as FEMA and other federal recovery programs get established and self-sustaining. There is a need to carve out time to conduct both internal and countywide after action reviews for both COVID and the derecho.

Upgrades to the Command and Control trailer are underway to improve the communications positions within the trailer. The wireless repeater in the EOC is being replaced and emergency management is collaborating with Story County Facilities on a joint venture to provide enhanced cell phone coverage throughout the building.

Emergency management will be conducting an I-35 closure drill towards the end of October to test some new procedures and refresh everyone's memory on their roles and responsibility should I-35 be closed.

As we indicated in the last quarterly report, it is hoped we can resume work with Ames to improve connections between their Incident Command Structure and the EOC, leading eventually to a functional exercise to test our ability to rapidly establish command and control during a disaster. Additionally, our office would also like to re-engage with Sheldahl to complete work started on the development of an enhanced Emergency Operations Plan for their community.